



## on aging Renee Mahler

Q. I am a retiree looking to do some volunteer work. A friend of mine told me about volunteers who act as counselors helping older people with their Medicare problems. Who can I call to find out more about this program?

A. The Detroit Area Agency on Aging, Area Aging on Aging 1-B and the Senior Alliance all have programs where volunteers serve as counselors to older persons who have problems and questions concerning Medicare, Medicaid and Supplemental Security Insurance. This free service is sponsored by the area agencies and the American Association of Retired Persons. Older adults are assisted with concerns or questions re-

garding Medicare, Medicaid eligibility, filing Medicare forms, Supplemental Security Insurance claims and appeals and hospital discharge policies.

Counselors receive three days of intensive training, a training manual and follow-up assistance. Volunteers are placed at various sites within their communities and there is ongoing counselor support.

For more information about becoming a counselor or if you need the services offered by this program, call your local area agency on aging. They are listed in your telephone directory.

Q. I had to admit my wife to a

nursing home that is very far from my house because the one closer to me did not have any beds available. They do now and I want to move her but the first home says that I have signed a contract saying that I will give them 30 days notice before I move her. Is there anything I can do?

A. If your wife is a Medicare or Medicaid recipient the nursing home cannot hold you to the thirty days terms stated in the contract. Medicare and Medicaid will not pay the original facility if you move your wife and you are certainly free to do so. Her Medicare or Medicaid benefits will transfer with her if she has not used up her Medicare allotment

at the first home. If you are paying your wife's bills privately then the terms of the contract do hold. Most nursing home contracts ask for a three day notice prior to leaving, thirty days is excessive.

Q. My husband had a heart attack several weeks ago and seems to be a different person. Where can I get information on how to handle his changed personality?

A. William Beaumont Hospital of-

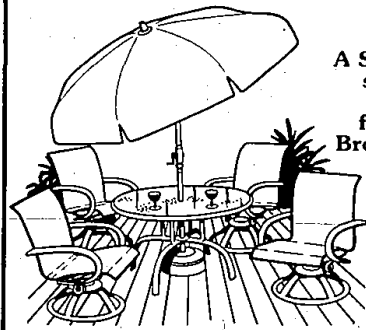
fers a support group for families of cardiac patients. A cardiac care nurse and a social worker help families understand and cope with the physical and emotional changes that heart patients may experience. The group's purpose is to help family members express and deal with their fears and frustrations in a constructive manner.

The groups meet every Thursday 3-4 p.m. at Beaumont's 5-Northeast Conference Room in the main hospital building. Beaumont is at 3601 W. 13 Mile in Royal Oak. To register for

the group or for more information call, toll free, 1-800-633-7377. People living outside of the Beaumont area should call their local hospitals to see if a similar program is offered.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admissions at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. Send your questions to her at Observer & Eccentric, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.

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